

Received: 5 June 2018
Revised: 10 June 2018
Accepted: 14 August 2018
Published: 31 December 2018

APPLICATION OF STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES IN IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILLS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

M. Nur Hakim^{1,a)}

Universitas Cokroaminoto Palopo, Palopo, Indonesia¹⁾

m.nur_hakim@ymail.com^{a)}

Abstract

Learning to speak is one of the obstacles experienced by students of class III MIS Darul Ulum Muhammadiyah Bulukumba. These obstacles appear from a lack of vocabulary, fluency, and understanding. Therefore, this study aims to improve students' speaking skills through the application of storytelling techniques. The research conducted is action research which includes the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Data collection is done through observation, interviews, and speaking tests, while the data analysis is done descriptively qualitatively and quantitatively. The results of this study indicate that during the application of storytelling techniques there is an increase in speaking skills that appear from the assessment indicators, which include: pressure, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and understanding. The results of the acquisition in the first cycle of 65.33 and an increase in cycle 2 of 73.78. Increased learning outcomes from cycle 1 to cycle 2 indicate that storytelling can have a positive impact on learning to speak.

Keywords: Learning techniques, storytelling, speaking skills

Speaking is one aspect of language skills taught at the elementary level. The application of learning to speak at the elementary level because it is considered important to be mastered by students from the basics. Effective speaking exercises from the elementary level can be a skill for students to develop speaking skills to the next stage. In addition, getting used to communication in the classroom makes students more confident to be skilled at public speaking.

As stated by Ampa (2015) to improve communication skills effectively, it can be done through good speaking exercises. Another opinion was expressed by Biduri (2016) that speaking skills are one's ability to express articulation sounds or words that aim to express, express opinions, and convey thoughts, ideas, and feelings to others. This concept is in line with the opinion expressed by Saddhono & Slamet (2014) that speaking is a means to communicate ideas that are compiled, and developed according to the needs of listeners or listeners.

Speaking activities can be characterized by the involvement between two or more people called the speaker and listener. Between the speaker and listener, the communication process occurs to understand each other. Each has a purpose to be achieved. The speaker aims to convey something to be interpreted or responded by the listener, both in terms of the shape and meaning of a speech (Idrissova, Smagulova, and Tussupbekova, 2015). This opinion is confirmed by Cole, Ellis, and Mason (2007) that the activity of such talk is often referred to as face-to-face communication. Face to face communication is a process that occurs collaboratively and interactively. Both exchanges of

information occur, to give comments or opinions to each other, sometimes interrupting, disagreeing, or extending the argument said by the speaker.

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted on third-grade students in one of the madrasa schools found problems in aspects of speaking skills. These problems appear in the low speaking skills of students who have grades below the completeness standard. The low value of students is caused by several obstacles in learning to speak, both in terms of the techniques used by the teacher and the ability of students who are still low.

Problems that appear in the teacher, namely: (1) lack of speaking opportunities given to students in class to try to express ideas or opinions; (2) there are still many influences on the use of regional languages in the formal domain; and (3) the learning techniques used are sometimes not appropriate with the material being taught, so learning to speak is less interesting. In addition, the obstacles faced by students in learning to speak, namely: (1) students lack the confidence to express opinions, for fear of being wrong; and (2) lack of vocabulary mastery, so students are not fluent in speaking in class, ie only one to two sentences can be expressed.

Referring to the problems that have been formulated indicate that learning to speak can be a serious concern for researchers. One way to overcome these problems is by applying storytelling techniques to improve students' speaking skills. As the opinion expressed by Bietti, Tilston, & Bangerter (2018); Bruner in Lombardo & Damiano (2012) that storytelling can be said as a center for the creation and distribution of cultural values for generations. This opinion is in line with the theory put forward by Geanellos (1996) that storytelling is a reconstruction of the past used by someone in conveying history, culture, traditions, knowledge, and skills to the public. Storytelling activities not only display aesthetic nature but can provide implications for the political world (Wilson cited Reason & Heinemeyer, 2016).

Storytelling can provide experience and knowledge to students to improve speaking skills, so students feel more confident to appear telling stories in front of the class. As Boyle (1998) stated, the strength of storytelling lies in the ability of the narrator to convey experiences to listeners so that the listener can be attracted to the story being told. In addition, storytelling provides opportunities for children to improve their language and reasoning skills (Curenton & Craig, 2011).

The reason for the application of storytelling techniques, because this technique can help students to skillfully speak through storytelling activities. Storytelling can encourage students to imagine through observations and knowledge that has been obtained in everyday life, both with friends, family, community, and the school environment (Eden, 2014). In addition, storytelling activities in the learning process have an important role in the development of students psychologically through the disclosure of motivation and character of the story being revealed (Nguyen, Stanley, Stanley, & Wang, 2015; Frude & Killick, 2011). Storytelling is seen as a way for teachers to implement their knowledge and understanding in the world of education (Savvidou, 2010). In fact, several studies have revealed that storytelling can have a positive impact on improving students' ability to communicate, which is seen in the mastery of vocabulary and understanding story content (Caminotti & Gray, 2012; Zare et al. 2016).

Based on the problems that have been pointed out shows that this research is important to do at elementary level students. The author hopes that the results of this study can be used as a reference to overcome the learning of speaking skills in elementary students. Thus, this study aims to improve speaking skills through the application of storytelling techniques to elementary school students.

METHOD

Research Design

This research uses the action research method. Baumfield, Hall, & Wall (2009) states that action research is a series of ongoing learning to build and develop experiences of learning practices. The action plan in this study uses the Kemmis and McTaggart models which include cyclic stages, which include: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

Data collection techniques in this study were observation, interviews, and tests. Observation is used to observe the activities of students and teachers during the application of storytelling techniques in learning to speak. Interviews are used to determine the level of difficulty and success of students during learning. Furthermore, the test is used to determine the success of learning at the end of each cycle by assessing speaking skills. Evaluation of speaking skills covers several aspects, namely: pressure, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and understanding (Nurgiyantoro, 2016).

There are two data analysis techniques in this study, namely qualitative and quantitative. Qualitatively, data were analyzed from observations and interviews, while quantitatively, data was analyzed from the results of tests conducted at the end of each cycle. Furthermore, after the data analysis stage is then determined indicators of student success in learning to speak, namely the average student learning outcomes individually score ≥ 70 in accordance with the minimum limit of Indonesian language subjects at the school.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in two cycles, namely each cycle including the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Cycle 1

Actions: The observations in cycle 1 appear that learning activities begin with apperception and delivery of material, then read the fairytale entitled *Sang Kancil dan Kerbau*. After that, students are assigned to identify the contents of the tale that has been listened to, by mentioning the title, theme, character and characterization, plot, mandate, and making a summary of the contents of the tale. Next, students are assigned to submit the results of the identification of fairy tales and a summary of the contents of the story. The observations showed that some students still looked shy and hesitant to give answers. However, some students also seemed to have the courage to give answers and summary stories. In addition, the observations also showed that students seemed enthusiastic about learning to speak because they were interested in storytelling techniques. The results of speaking skills tests through the application of storytelling in cycle 1 obtained an average value of 65.33, a maximum value of 76, and a minimum of 48.

Reflection: The results of reflection in cycle 1 concluded that learning has not been carried out to the maximum. Some of the problems faced, such as the lack of opportunities given by students to ask questions that are not understood, the teacher is still lacking approach to students who are not focused, and some students still seem doubtful and afraid to submit answers. In addition, students still seem difficult to convey the contents of the story, because there is still a lack of vocabulary mastery, so storytelling activities are not smooth. The research was continued into cycle 2 because there were still some obstacles that had to be corrected to improve students' skills in learning to speak.

The following is the presentation of research findings on aspects of speaking skills that include: pressure, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and understanding.

Pressure

The results of the assessment on the stress aspect show that when students tell stories there are still many errors in pronunciation of words and sentences, such as no intonation that is appropriate to the content of the story. Words that are not emphasized when telling stories, such as words *wahh...* This word is an expression that is said deer when receiving a buffalo invitation. Students just say in a flat voice without any pressure as a happy and happy tone, because they receive a lunch invitation from a buffalo.

Furthermore, several phrases and sentences that were not emphasized were still found when students told the story, including, *istriku apa yang terjadi?, celaka suamiku, ha..ha..ha.. Aku mencium bau kalian kerbau-kerbau muda!, Kancil menggeram dengan keras, Huahhhhhaamm!! Siapa yang berani masuk ke wilayah berburuku? Seru kancil.* One of the factors causing the lack of emphasis when delivering the contents of the story, because students have not mastered the content of the story well.

Grammar

Assessments on grammatical aspects related to language use and accuracy of structures are pronounced correctly. The results of the assessment on grammatical aspects show that the choice of words and the set of sentences used when telling stories is still unclear, unattractive, not even communicative. This causes the process of creation to be monotonous and less interesting to hear.

Students have difficulty with grammar because they have not been able to distinguish several aspects of the use of words or sentences, such as the use of question or sentence sentences. In addition, the storytelling activities are undertaken by students also experience obstacles in the aspect of punctuation, ie students sometimes only tell stories continuously without any pauses.

Vocabulary

The assessment of the vocabulary aspects is related to the choice of words in the context of the sentence. The results of the assessment on the vocabulary aspects show that there are still some errors found in the pronunciation of words that do not fit the context of the story being told. In addition, vocabulary mastery is still very limited causing students to not be able to tell stories in a structured way.

Smoothness

Assessment on aspects of fluency is related to students' ability to express things without repetition of words and sentences. The results of the assessment on the aspects of fluency indicate that there are still found several repetitions of words and sentences at the beginning of the story. In addition, when students tell stories, sometimes students stop and it is very difficult to continue the story because there is still a lack of vocabulary and still looks nervous. The repetition of words or phrases sometimes occurs at the beginning of the story and the core part of the story, so the storytelling process cannot be completed. The story is told only in the opening and content section.

Understanding

Assessment on the aspect of understanding includes the ability of students to understand the meaning of words or sentences expressed when conveying the contents of the story. The results of the assessment on the aspect of understanding showed that overall students were able to understand the theme of the story being told. In addition, students are able to understand the moral messages and social values contained in the content of the story.

Cycle 2

Actions: The results of observations in cycle 2 show that learning activities begin with apperception and delivery of material, then read the fairytale entitled Putri Tandimpalik. After that, students are assigned to identify the contents of the story, make summaries, and practice conveying the contents of the story. In the discussion activities, students look serious, but there are still students who are seen playing. As for the results of the group presentations, it appears that overall each group has been able to provide answers. This shows that students are quite enthusiastic about learning activities. The results of speaking skills tests through the application of storytelling techniques in cycle 2 obtained an average value of 73.78, a maximum value of 84, and a minimum of 60.

Reflection: The results of reflection in cycle 2 concluded that learning had been carried out well. Although there are still students who appear to be playing, the teacher is able to distract students from staying focused on learning. The observations also showed that the level of student confidence increased when they appeared telling stories in front of the class. These aspects can be seen from the increased assessment which includes, mastering vocabulary, grammar, emphasis, fluency, and understanding.

Next is the presentation of cycle 2 research findings on aspects of speaking skills assessment which include: pressure, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and understanding.

Pressure

The results of the assessment on the pressure aspect have increased, although some errors were still found because some of the words and sentences are spoken by students have not been able to be emphasized properly. The increase that occurred in the aspect of pressure showed that students were able to provide intonation of words that fit the content of the story. In addition, a good mastery of the story can help students in the process of telling. Like the emphasis of words or sentences that can build storytelling activities to make it more interesting to watch.

Grammar

Assessment of grammatical aspects also increased slightly, because some students were able to construct sentences to convey the contents of the story. The difficulties students still experience when speaking, because they have not been able to master aspects of the use of words or sentences effectively, such as the use of question or sentence sentences. The error appears when students only tell the story, without any pauses or tones that fit the context of the story.

Vocabulary

The assessment results on the vocabulary aspects show improvement from the previous cycle. The improvement was seen from the students' ability to master several vocabulary words so that the storyline delivered could be structured. However, observations also found some vocabulary that is difficult to say by students. This is because the vocabulary is not yet familiar to students, so it is quite difficult to pronounce it.

Smoothness

The results of storytelling implementation activities in the aspect of fluency speak showed a fairly good improvement. Increased fluency in speaking, because students are quite enthusiastic about storytelling exercises. Repetition of words, phrases, and sentences has decreased from the previous cycle. Students appear confident in telling a story in front of the class so that the story can be finished to the end.

Understanding

The fifth aspect of assessment relates to understanding. Understanding speaking includes

understanding the meaning of words or sentences expressed when conveying the contents of the story. The results of the assessment on the aspect of understanding show that overall students have understood the story well. The interviews also revealed that students understood the moral messages and social values contained in the story content.

Based on the results of the implementation of research from cycle 1 to cycle 2 it appears that students' abilities in learning have increased after applying storytelling techniques. The application of storytelling techniques has an impact on students' vocabulary mastery and level of understanding of the material. This is in line with the opinion expressed by Curenton & Craig (2011) that storytelling provides opportunities for children to improve their language and reasoning skills. In addition, Geanellos (1996) also believes that storytelling is a reconstruction of the past that someone uses in conveying history, culture, traditions, knowledge, and skills to the public.

The results of this study are also supported by several previous studies. However, the findings of previous studies differ from the results of this study. The difference can be seen from the types of research and learning that are improved in students, such as research by Marzuki, Prayogo, & Wahyudi (2016) which emphasizes improving English learning through storytelling strategies. In addition, the results of research by Mokhtar, Halim, & Kamarulzaman (2011) also emphasized the improvement of communication skills through storytelling strategies. Thus, the results of previous studies with the results of this study have similarities in the application of storytelling strategies in language learning.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that this study shows quite good results because it is proven that after applying storytelling techniques, students' speaking skills can improve. These results appear in research data which shows an increase in the learning process and outcomes. In terms of the process after the action was carried out up to cycle 2, it appears that the learning activities were carried out well because the average student showed an enthusiastic attitude in participating in the learning activities. In addition, these results are also marked by the increased ability of students in the aspects of pressure, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and understanding of the contents of the story being told.

The results of speaking skills ranging from the results of the implementation of the first cycle test to the results of the second cycle test have increased. As seen in the data, it shows that the implementation of the first cycle test obtained the percentage of completeness is only 55.5% and in cycle 2 has increased with a percentage level reaching 83.3%. Thus, it was concluded that this study can be said to be successful.

REFERENCES

- Ampa, A. T. (2015). The implementation of interactive multimedia learning materials in teaching listening skills. *English Language Teaching*, 8(12), 56. Doi:10.5539/elt.v8n12p56.
- Baumfield, Vivienne., Hall, E., & Wall, K. (2009). *Action Research di Ruang Kelas*. Diterjemahkan oleh Didik Prayitno. Indeks.
- Biduri, F. N. (2016). *Pengajaran Berbicara*, ed. Andri Wicaksono dan Ahmad Subhan Rosa. Garudhawaca.
- Curenton, S. M., & Craig, M. J. (2011). Shared- reading versus oral storytelling: associations with preschoolers' prosocial skills and problem behaviors. *Early Child Development and Care*, 181(1), 123–146.doi:10.1080/03004430903292208.
- Bietti, L. M., Tilston, O., & Bangerter, A. (2018). Storytelling as Adaptive Collective Sensemaking. *Topics in Cognitive Science*. doi:10.1111/tops.12358.

-
- Boyle, M. (1998). Storytelling, Relevance and the Bilingual Child. *English in Education*, 32(2), 15–23. doi:10.1111/j.1754-8845.1998.tb00146.x
- Caminotti, E., & Gray, J. (2012). The Effectiveness of Storytelling on Adult Learning. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 24 (6), 430-438.
- Cole, D., Ellis, C., & Mason, B. (2007). *Teaching Speaking and Listening a Toolkit for Practitioners*.
- Eden, S. (2014). Virtual intervention to improve storytelling ability among deaf and hard-of-hearing children. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 29(3), 370–386. doi:10.1080/08856257.2014.909177.
- Frude, N., & Killick, S. (2011). Family Storytelling and The Attachment Relationship. *Psychodynamic Practice*, 17 (4), 441–455. Doi:10.1080/14753634.2011.609025.
- Geanellos, R. (1996). Storytelling: a teaching-learning technique. *Contemporary Nurse*, 5(1), 28–35. doi:10.5172/conu.5.1.28.
- Idrissova, M., Smagulova, B., & Tussupbekova, M. (2015). Improving Listening and Speaking Skills in Mixed Level Groups (on the Material of New English File). *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199, 276-284.
- Lombardo, V., & Damiano, R. (2012). Storytelling on mobile devices for cultural heritage. *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, 18(1-2), 11–35. doi:10.1080/13614568.2012.617846.
- Marzuki, M., Prayogo, J. A., & Wahyudi, A. (2016). Improving the EFL learners' speaking ability through interactive storytelling. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 16(1), 15-34.
- Mokhtar, N. H., Halim, M. F. A., & Kamarulzaman, S. Z. S. (2011). The Effectiveness of Storytelling in Enhancing Communicative Skills. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 18, 163-169.
- Nguyen, K., Stanley, N., Stanley, L., & Wang, Y. (2015). Resilience in language learners and the relationship to storytelling. *Cogent*.
- Nurdiyanto, B. (2016). *Penilaian Pembelajaran Berbahasa Berbasis Kompetensi*. BPFE.
- Reason, M., & Heinemeyer, C. (2016). Storytelling, story-retelling, storyknowing: towards a participatory practice of storytelling. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 21(4), 558–573. doi:10.1080/13569783.2016.1220247.
- Saddhono, K., & Slamet. (2014). *Pembelajaran Keterampilan Berbahasa Indonesia Teori dan Aplikasi*. Graha Ilmu.
- Savvidou, C. (2010). Storytelling as dialogue: how teachers construct professional knowledge. *Teachers and Teaching*, 16(6), 649–664. doi:10.1080/13540602.2010.517682.
- Zare-Behtash, E., Saed, A., & Sajjadi, F. (2016). The Effect of Storytelling Technique on Speaking Ability of Female Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 5 (1), 209-214.
-